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## SUMMER DIRECTIVE 1988

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Dear Observer,

Before I get down to business I want to thank you all very much indeed for the enormous amount of work you put in to the last two Directives, especially those who found one or other of them uninspiring but nevertheless worked at it. The result has been two collections of very high quality.

The Summer Directive is in two parts. Part I is about something we all have lots of, or too little, something we save and waste - Time. Part II is about objects round the house. The material is for an exhibition called "Household Choices" planned by the Victoria & Albert Museum for 1990.

### **PART I: TIME**

Let me say again that the following should not be treated as questions to answer so much as ideas to get you started. I hope they will suggest many more aspects of the topic than I mention.

How many clocks do you possess, including those on domestic equipment? Please give details, e.g. traditional, digital, grandfather, bracket etc. - If you prefer traditional clock/watch faces to 'digital displays', please think hard about your reasons. - Do you regularly carry a watch? If so, give details - make, reliability, bought or given etc. - Do you feel anxious, or just not fully dressed without a watch? - Do you have other watches worn only occasionally or kept for purely sentimental reasons? - Do you use an alarm clock (or radio), do you depend on it? - How much do you use radio programmes as a sort of clock? - How many visible clocks are there in your neighbourhood? Are there any that you think of as particularly useful? Are there other events in the course of the day that you use to tell the time?

What about your 'internal clock'? Are you good at guessing the time, within 5 to 15 mins? When are you likely to lose all track of time? - Are you good at estimating the time needed for a job or for getting from A to B? - Can you 'set yourself' to wake up at an unusual hour? - When clocks go forward and back, do you adapt with equal ease to both changes? Air-travellers: is your reaction to an East-West flight the same as to a West-East one? - Do you 'just know' when it's coffee-time or whenever? - How much, or when, do you use a clock (or timer) when you are cooking? - Are you an 'owl' or a 'lark', if neither, at what times of day are you most and least vigorous? Are your nearest and dearest like you or unlike?

Generally do you arrive at places 'with time in hand' e.g. trains, appointments, or 'just in time', or are you often in a last minute rush? - Are you punctual on unimportant occasions? - How does the differing behaviour of other people in these regards affect you?

How much is the ordinary day governed by a timetable thought up by yourself or imposed by the nature of work? - Do you like working, more or less closely, to a timetable even on holiday or at weekends? Do you find it easy to get out of the timetabling frame of mind (recently retired please note)? - Do you find other people's insistence on punctuality irksome? - Is there anything in your upbringing that relates to your behaviour in this area?

What do you really mean when you speak of a 'waste of time'? When and/or in what activities, and how, do you 'save time' How do you 'spend' the time you save? - In what circumstances does time go quickly or slowly for you? - How much does thought about the future affect your present behaviour? When it does, how far ahead are you thinking? Is that the limit of how far you can realistically think about the future? - Would you care to reflect on the ways we talk about 'time' generally and in popular sayings?

That seems to be enough for the time being!

## **PART II: OBJECTS ABOUT THE HOUSE**

(Please start your answer on a SEPARATE sheet)

When future generations try to understand how we lived in our homes they will have a great many images to help them, both the glossy images of advertising and family snaps. But neither of these sources will tell much about what we think and feel about the objects we've gathered round us and how those feelings have changed over time.

Some objects, clearly, have aesthetic value and others have a sentimental value for a special reason. But we are also thinking of the things which have 'stood the test of time', because they've served us well or given continuing pleasure. And you may fondly remember things you had, reluctantly, to discard for some reason. We would like you to tell us about the things of which you are most fond, and why. Include examples of those which have lasted well, or which you now miss, even if they don't have a special sentimental importance, remember not to overlook objects just because they are either very large or very small. On the other hand, we all have made purchases which we later came to regret, even though they seemed all right at the time. Some objects around the house may not have lasted well, or don't look the same in today's light. Please tell us about these things as well, and why your feelings about them have changed.

A list of half a dozen objects of each sort, with your feelings about them, will leave a fine record for tomorrow's historians. But if you would like to add reflections on other 'favourites' and 'follies', that's also welcome.

Please try to give detailed descriptions of unusual objects.

David Pocock

Special note: If you send in anything written by someone other than yourself, please can you ask them whether they would mind signing over copyright to the Archive at the end of their contribution. Then we can file it along with all the other contributions.

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